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A SHORT SKETCH

OF

THE LIFE

OF

ELI W. CARUTHERS, D. D.

SKETCH

BY

D. SCHENCK.

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A SHORT SKETCH
OF THE LIFE OF
REV. ELI W. CARUTHERS, D. D.,

*Pastor of Buffalo and Alamance Presbyterian
Churches, Guilford Co., N. C., and
a Historian of 1776.*

It is not an easy task to write an interesting account of the life and works of a man whose life, almost, all of it, in his maturity was spent in one calling and with one occupation, and that by no means eventful—Mr. Caruthers was born in Rowan county, N. C., in the year 1793. He seems to have been either a full Scotchman or a Scotch-Irishman by birth—certain it was that he possessed the unflinching integrity and patriotism of those noble christian peoples and exhibited his worth and integrity and love of country in all the phases of his life.

His picture taken when he was an old gentleman shows him to have been rather rugged in appearance but with very strong intellectual features which the Battle Ground Company hopes very soon to have in oil by David L. Clark, Esq., artist, High Point, N. C.

Mr. Caruthers was born in Rowan county in 1793, so a tablet to his memory at Alamance church, five miles south of Greensboro shows, and he was, for a long number of years, assistant pastor with David F. Caldwell, D. D.,—two men of whom that congregation may well be proud. It seems that

when Mr. Caruthers first came to Guilford county and to the hospitable home of Dr. Caldwell he was a young graduate of Princeton College, New Jersey—his diploma of graduation being now in possession of Dr. Dred. Peacock, President of the Greensboro Female College. Dr. Caldwell was so much impressed with the worth and intelligence and christian zeal of his young visitor that he invited him to remain until the following Sabbath and preach for him. He was still so much pleased that he advised the people of his congregation to give him a call as assistant pastor, and in that way Dr. Caruther's history became linked and interwoven with that of Guilford county and greatly attached him to its local revolutionary history and caused him to search for the truth of that wonderful period and to transfer his thoughts and such important history to print in his memorable and honorable pages of his "Sketches of the Old North State" in 1776, known in two small volumes as series First and Second. They were given much honor and reputation, especially in the "Second Series" by his refutation of the slander of the North Carolina militia in the Battle of Guilford Court House, and which has induced Judge David Schenck to elaborate and add to it a more serious and exhaustive account of "North Carolina in 1780-'81," in which he drew largely on Dr. Caruther's information and from that the Guilford Battle Company has built up the company by that name, which has gained such wide spread reputation all over the Union and which is still expanding in honor and worth to history.

To Mr. Joseph M. Morehead belongs the honor of finding a long lost photograph of Dr. Caruthers and having it reproduced for all time that his name and features may never be lost. The tablet above alluded to records that Dr. Caruthers died in the year 1865, and from persons still alive, we learn that he died at the home of Samuel Denny, Esq., about six miles east of Greensboro, where he had gone to pay a short visit. We learn that his "end was peaceful and resigned"—

his faith was steadfast and the "rod of the Lord" comforted him as he passed over the "dark valley and shadow" before him.

Dr. Caruthers was an inveterate and uncompromising foe to the distillation and use as a beverage of alcoholic liquors, and by his brave denunciation of these vices, more common then, than now, incurred some displeasure of a part of his people. He was also opposed to slavery and continued so to his death though he was not violent or offensive in his opinions—he was no slave owner and refused to take one even to save a debt.

Dr. Caruthers had some peculiarities, remembered still by members of his flock, some leaning to the humorous side of life. He was accustomed to wear a high hat, a "beaver as it was called" and at times wore it in the family he was visiting and did not remove it when politeness would indicate its propriety. The hat is still shown in his photograph and is of the high order.

It is said that he ate molasses wherever he went, it is supposed that this habit was used as a medical corrective—but at any rate he was a great consumer of molasses.

His hair was of a sandy color and distinctively of a Scotch type. He was buried at Alamance church where he rests among his people, to whom his memory is still dear. He was a God-fearing man, and his first inquiry about any question was "Is it right? Is it God's will?" and he impressed these solemn inquiries on the mind of his congregation. In his old age he was said to be somewhat prosy and a little long but this is not an infrequent error of old age but no one doubted his sincerity and devotion to the truth taught in the sacred word of the Scriptures.

Alamance and Buffalo have given more preachers of the Word than any other congregations and they should revere and perpetuate his blessed memory.

This humble tribute to Dr. Caruthers' memory is not from the church but from one who loves his memory on account of

his fervent patriotism and his uncompromising love for the memory of his dear old State "NORTH CAROLINA."

"Green be the turf above him" till some better and nobler tribute is paid to his worthy memory.

Dr. Caruthers is buried in the cemetery of Alamance church where he rests in the bosom of his congregation. They have erected over the grave a neat marble shaft to commemorate his life.

Feb'y 9th, 1901.

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